

NO. 1,238

HAWTHORNE was one of the shyest and most sensitive natures with which any author of our day was endowed. He shrank on publicity, he was never at ease in the presence of strangers, and rare indeed was the occasion when a neighbor could penetrate the reserve behind which he intruded himself.

THE UNION.

APRIL 10, 1886.

A BALLAD OF THE GULF STREAM.

SEVEN through a hundred storms
The sailing ship had passed;
She sailed now in the mystic stream
Of waters warm and fast,
And the great brown sails, like weary things
Were hanging against the mast.

There leaned upon the idle helm
A bearded sailor-man;
His forehead was marked by years,
His cheeks were brown with tan,
And his heart was rude as the seas it loved
Where no mean currents ran.

A tender breeze sprang up behind
And tossed his grizzled hair;
And the sailor started back, as pale
As if a ghost were there;
For he saw a yellow butterfly
Mown through the summer air.

It lighted upon the compass-box,
And the sailor's eye grew dim,
And his winged thoughts flew far away,
Beyond the horizon line,
To a ruined homestead on the land,
Where were none to think of him.

Again, in the meadow broad and green,
On a holiday in June,
He heard the drowsy hum of bees
Singing their quiet tune;
And he watched the elm tree's shadow grow,
In the waning afternoon.

Again, beneath the cottage roof,
When the evening prayer was said,
He felt his mother's soft hand rest
In blessing on his head;
And his father's kiss upon his brow,
As he knelt beside his bed.

But the boatswain's whistle, strange and shrill,
Was sounding in his ears,
And his thoughts came back from their pilgrimage
Of more than two-score years;
And, with a rough and horny hand,
He dashed away his tears.

HOW HE FOUND HER.

"How much can you give me for these, sir?"

The stout, good-natured dealer in second-hand books looked at the pale, pretty face of the owner of the sweet, silvery voice, and just glanced at the rather passé cloak and gloves, before he proceeded to business. She had taken three books from a rather shabby shopping bag, and held them toward him for inspection. They were handsomely bound volumes of poetry—Mrs. Browning and Jean Ingelow, in ultramarine and gold, and a copy of a large edition of Longfellow, in bold, handsome type, with fine illustrations, and bound in thick purple morocco. The dealer scented "better times" at the articles offered, for the books were of the costliest, and "reduced circumstances" was plainly written upon the poor apparel.

"They cost a good many dollars, sir," said the low voice, timidly, "and they are not much worn."

"Yes, I dare say; but you see they are, after all, second-hand books, and sell for a trifle."

"I hope you'll allow me as much as you possibly can, sir," she said, timidly. "Who says poverty isn't a curse?"

"Certainly. I'll give you a dollar for the large one, and fifty cents for each of the others. I shall likely sell them for that, so you see I could not afford to give more."

And he spoke truly. Something in the uncommon sadness and sweetness of the face and manner touched him, though usually he was keenly alive to the main chance.

He went to the drawer to get the money, and Lelia Westfield, as she pulled out her handkerchief to wipe away a tear that started for the loss of her treasures, did not notice that she had pulled a bill also from her pocket, and it lay there a dumb tell-tale as she took the money from his hand with thanks, and walked out of the store.

"Was the best that could do," she mused, as she increased her way along the busy street; "but it seems so little to get, and it was so hard to part with Lester's gift, but I cannot starve when there is anything I can turn into money." And two or three tears welled up in the violet eyes and trickled slowly down her cheek—shorn of its roses—behind her thick veil. She went on and on, and finally turned into a cross street of tenement houses, and went up three flights of stairs into a little back attic-room. "It ain't much," she thought, as she sat down on the side of her bed and smoothed out the two dollar bill, "but it will keep me from being turned out of doors another week, and I have a little sewing I can do. O, dear father, how lonely I am! What ought I to do?" she sobbed, as she laid down on the little bed with its white covering and shed bitter tears.

She had not gone more than two or three blocks before the dealer espied the letter. He seized it eagerly and read the address: "Miss Lelia Westfield, No. 7—street," then, with a kindly interest to know something of the pretty woman, he pulled out the letter and read:

"DEAR LELIA—Don't stay there any longer starving to death and killing yourself by inches, come back and marry Mr. Pierce. I know he's got enough to be your grandfather, but he's got such lots of money that it will make up. Lonia has either forgotten you or is dead. He'll never come back. Take my advice. From your cousin BELLA."

"Have you purchased this book lately?" Mr. Adams turned from a pile of books he was inspecting to answer the question. A tall, aristocratic looking gentleman was turning over the leaves of the "Longfellow," he had purchased not an hour before. There was a strange agitation in his manner.

"Yes, only about an hour ago from a young lady. She brought these also," producing the other two.

"What does this mean?" muttered the stranger, and he turned to some of the other passages, and again to the blank page where a name and date had been carefully removed with an ink eraser. Yet not so perfectly but he detected it.

"I know the book," he said to the dealer. "Do you—but of course you don't know anything about the lady who brought it?"

There was a happy little bubble of joy in the dealer's heart. What if this were the Lionel of the letter reposing in his breast pocket?

"By a queer chance I do," he said. "Here's a letter she dropped on the floor, and I did not notice it until after she had left."

The stranger took it excitedly. "The same," he said, as he read the address. "I have been searching almost hopelessly for this lady. You will please do these books up. I want to take them along with me."

The dealer thought the little romance was coming to a head, as he tied up the books in white paper. The gentleman gave him a twenty dollar bill, took the books and started.

"Your change," called Mr. Adams.

"No change, sir. This transaction is worth a thousand dollars to me."

The dealer thought of counterfeits, but upon examination found the promise to pay was genuine, and congratulated himself upon his good luck.

"Ting-a-ling, ling, ling, ling," went the door bell.

"Does Miss Lelia Westfield board here?" "She has a room here, yes," said the girl that answered the bell, wondering

much how Miss Westfield came to have such a handsome caller. "Up three flights back," for she had no intention of climbing three flights to call her down.

Lionel Percy mounted the stairs with quick elastic steps. "Lelia Westfield in cheap tenement house like this!" he said, sotto voce.

Lelia had got over her cry, and had bathed her face and brushed her hair, when there was a decided rap at the door.

She opened it, looked a moment with speechless joy into the dear, handsome face; and then found her voice. "O Lionel, you've come! I have prayed day and night that you would find me."

"Lelia, my darling!"

"How in the world have you found me?" she questioned, when she could fairly realize that she was not dreaming.

"Though I prayed, I did not dare to hope."

He brought the rescued books to light from where he had flung the package on the floor at his entrance, and also the letter, and told Lelia the story, to her extreme wonder.

"How little I expected to find this change," he said, "when I parted from you three years ago. My darling, how you must have suffered!"

"I little expected it either, and my life has been rather hard; but it is all forgotten now. Though he seemed to be wealthy, papa died a poor man."

"I found that out since I returned from Europe, three months ago. I have been trying ever since to find out your whereabouts from your former friends, a few of whom I chanced to know, but no one could give me a hint."

"My uncle in L— offered me a home, and I was so lonely and helpless that I gladly accepted it. After a while he wanted me to marry a rich old man. His business was involved, and Mr. Pierce would aid him if he could persuade me to marry him. I refused to sell myself for gold, and my uncle turned me out of doors. Then I had to seek my living as best I might, and I came here. I have had enough sewing to do to keep me from starvation; but I was afraid that you had forgotten me. It was strange about our letters being miscarried so often."

"I lost yours through traveling so continually, and mine never reached you because I directed to your old residence until I gave up in despair."

And then a train of circumstantial evidence united two lovers, and Fate, for once was propitious.

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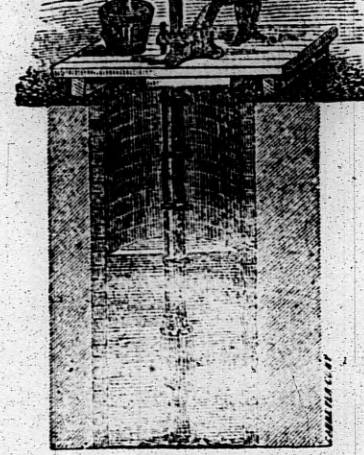
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